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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/748,733	12/30/2003	Dwight P. Morejohn	GUID-036	7537
36154	7590	07/17/2006	EXAMINER	
LAW OFFICE OF ALAN W. CANNON 834 SOUTH WOLFE ROAD SUNNYVALE, CA 94086			KILKENNY, PATRICK J	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3732	

DATE MAILED: 07/17/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.		Applicant(s)	
	10/748,733		MOREJOHN ET AL.	
	Examiner		Art Unit	
	Patrick J. Kilkenney		3732	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 April 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,11,13-30,44 and 45 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 2,16-19,21 and 23-30 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,11,13-15,20,22, and 44-45 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 11, 13-15, 20, 22, and 44-45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Nicholas et al. (5,967,974). Nicholas et al. discloses a transabdominal access system with upper and lower spreader portions (Fig. 3, #'s 114 and 126) configured to lift the rib cage while depressing the abdomen to produce a substernal space. The lower spreader portion comprises a depressor portion capable of depressing the diaphragm and the abdominal organs (Fig. 3, # 112 and 114) and the upper portion has a hook for contacting the sternal area (Fig. 3, #132). The depressor portion is essentially flat. There are also first and second side portions (Fig. 3, # 113 and opposite side) positioned between the upper and lower spreader portions and are integrally connected to the upper and lower spreader portions. The upper spreader portion also has a screw-type retraction mechanism for lifting and retracting the sternum (Fig. 3, #128).

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 4/17/2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. The system of Nicholas et al. is inherently capable of providing sub-

sternal access via the lifting of the ribcage and the depression of the abdominal cavity. It possesses the claimed features of the applicant's system and is essentially the same structure as the embodiment of Figure 2 of the applicant's specification. The fact that it is also capable of spreading individual ribs does not limit the system from being used as a transabdominal access system, just as the applicant's invention could be used to spread ribs. The depressor of Nicholas et al. is made up of two flat regions (114 and 112). The presence of the hook member (112) does not limit the depression of the diaphragm. The combination of the hook member (112) and the depressor portion (114) create a contoured surface that would allow both ventral-dorsal and cranial-caudal depression of the diaphragm.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

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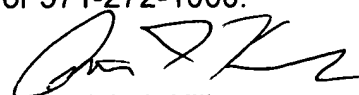
the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Patrick J. Kilkenney whose telephone number is (571) 272-8684. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri, 8-5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Chris Rodriguez can be reached on (571) 272-4964. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


PJK


Patrick J. Kilkenney
Art Unit 3732
July 10, 2006
7/10/2006


CRIS L. RODRIGUEZ
PRIMARY EXAMINER